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# DOMINION ELECTION

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CAMPAIGN OF 1886.

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## Hon. Edward Blake's Speeches.

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No. 1, (First Series).

### NORTH-WEST MALADMINISTRATION,

Speech before the Reform Association's  
Meeting at Owen Sound.

NOTE.—See Inside Cover for List of Mr. Blake's Speeches  
in first Series.

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**List of Mr. Blake's Speeches during 1886, included  
in this Series of Campaign Documents.**

- No. 1—(OWEN SOUND): **North-West Maladministration.**
- No. 2—(BEAVERTON): **Independence of Parliament—The  
Boodle Brigade.**
- No. 3—(CHESLEY): **The Public Finances—Taxation and  
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- No. 5—(OWEN SOUND—Young Liberal Association): **Principles of  
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No. 13 (Hamilton)

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**Mr. Blake to the Owen Sound Reform Association.**

**NORTH-WEST AFFAIRS.**

**MALADMINISTRATION AND REBELLION.**

**STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE OF 125,000 IMMIGRANTS.**

**Tupperian Calculations—Premature Surveys—Grievances of the Metis—Value of Half-breed Sympathy.**

**"FORCE IS NO REMEDY."**

**REFUSAL OF INFORMATION BY THE GOVERNMENT.**

**Scandalous Treatment of Indians—"What About Riel?"—The "Bunter and Smasher" Fanatics.**

HON. EDWARD BLAKE, on coming forward to respond, was received with cheers and the waving of hats and handkerchiefs. The applause was renewed again and again until he raised his hand in request of silence. He said:—

"Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the Reform Associations, whose addresses I have just been privileged to receive: I give you my best thanks for the language, all too kind, and the expressions, all too flattering, which you have been pleased to use towards me. I wish I could feel myself in any degree worthy of them. I can only claim for myself that, conscious of many imperfections and failings in my public career, it has, at any rate, been animated by an earnest desire, to the best of my humble powers and to the limit of my poor ability, to do some little good to the country in which I was born, in which it is my happiness to live, and where I hope to die, and so to leave the corner of the world in which I live a little better for the life that I have lived in it." (Loud and prolonged applause.)

Entering upon the discussion of public questions, Mr. Blake touched briefly upon the tariff, the reform of the Senate, Pro-

vincial rights, the right of Canada to make commercial treaties, and the independence of Parliament. Dealing more at length with

#### QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE NORTH-WEST,

he said:—"You remember well what hopes the people of Canada, particularly the people of Ontario, entertained for many years with reference to the North-Western country. You know that we desired earnestly to see that country filled with an industrious and law-abiding population, growing rich and strong, to their own advantage first, but also to ours, increasing the material and also increasing the political elements of Canadian strength. You know that, with that view, we have been willing, all of us, to make some pecuniary sacrifices, to add somewhat to our burdens, and to engage in the prudent conduct of enterprises which most Reformers believe have been imprudently managed, and whose management they have therefore opposed." You know, also, that *the progress of that country has unhappily been impaired by misgovernment, maladministration, and neglect.* You remember that AT THE VERY OPENING OF OUR CONNECTION WITH THAT COUNTRY, IN 1869, AND 1870, THE NEGLECT BY THE TORY GOVERNMENT of those precautions which ought to have been taken in dealing with the annexation, not of a territory merely, but of the population who inhabited it, PRODUCED A REBELLION. (Applause.) For fifteen years since that time we have gone on with full control of affairs in the administration and development of that country. You remember that from time to time statements were made of grievances, of discontent, of neglect, of delay, of maladministration. You remember also that the Government declared that those statements were entirely without foundation, they declared not only that there were no grievances, but that there was no serious complaint of grievances. Sir Hector Langevin went there in the summer of 1884, and three or four other Ministers as well. They travelled about, they saw the people, they received entertainments. SIR HECTOR LANGEVIN gave an account of the result. He SAID THAT HE WENT THERE at the request of the first Minister FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF FINDING OUT WHAT THE GRIEVANCES WERE; HE FOUND ONLY TWO MEN WHO HAD A GRIEVANCE, and that grievance was that there were not enough ladies in the country. (Loud applause and laughter.) Now, these all-wise governors, who claimed that they had so wisely administered affairs, also declared that their success was marvellous and unprecedented.

#### THE ROAD WAS "NOT TO COST THE COUNTRY A CENT,"

they said when they were persuading you to advance large sums in connection with the Canadian Pacific Railway (which sums

now amount all told, apart from the land and including the amounts for the eastern extensions, to about \$85,000,000, or about \$400,000 for each electoral district—which would be about \$1,200,000 for the County of Grey alone). I say that *they declared that this expenditure would cost you nothing, because, principal and interest, it would all be repaid at no distant day by sales of the lands of the North-West.* In the year 1880 Sir John Macdonald declared that by the year 1891 we would have secured from North-West lands some \$71,500,000, from which you were to deduct \$2,400,000 for expenses, leaving about \$69,000,000 clear gain. So late as the year 1883 Sir Chas. Tupper brought down a statement from the Department of the Interior, showing that in the years from January, 1883, to December, 1891, they would realize in cash \$58,000,000. They pledged themselves to the people that every shilling, principal and interest, would be repaid out of these lands. That is all exploded now;

#### THE BUBBLE IS BURST.

The returns from North-West lands for the period of five years past were about four millions of dollars, and the net returns, deducting the costs of surveys and administration in the West and at Ottawa, were \$370,000 only, while last year there was a balance of about \$300,000 on the wrong side of the ledger, and that without deducting a shilling on account of the \$1,100,000 a year we spend on Indians, \$450,000 a year on Mounted Police, and other charges of hundreds of thousands on account of administration. Put these sums on one side—suppose them to be paid in some other way—and take the lands, what they produce on one side and what it costs to administer them on the other, and you find these results. I challenged these men on this subject in the House of Commons. I said:—*Will you say that of the sum you mentioned only three years ago as certain to be realized, even one-tenth of it will be realized net?* And they would not say me nay. (Cheers.) They said the immigrants would pour in and were pouring in rapidly. To the figures they gave of the number who had settled I added something for the natural increase of the population. And I find that, taking the official figures, showing those who were actually there, and the natural increase, there were

ABOUT 125,000 PEOPLE A-MISSING.

(Laughter and applause.) I asked them:—*Did these people come in? You said they did; is it true? If it is true that they did come in, where are they now? (Hear, hear.) Do their bones whiten the prairie? We know they don't, for the country is a wealthy*

country. *Have they gone away?* Too many have, but not all these. *The fact is it was all a delusion; so many people never settled there at all.* They said the people there would cultivate enormous areas of the lands and produce enormous crops, to the advantage of the whole people of Canada. They made a calculation about that too. They said: The staple of that country is wheat. Sir Charles Tupper, in my hearing (at one of those times when he was persuading us to make some great grants for the railway), asked us whether the members of the House had considered what a hundred thousand farmers in that country would produce.

#### A TUPPERIAN CALCULATOR.

"I have considered it," said he, "I have made a calculation; I will give that calculation, and it will perhaps surprise some of you who have not taken the pains I have to find out the facts. The facts are that a hundred thousand farmers in that country will produce 640,000,000 bushels of wheat in a year!" (Loud laughter.) Yes, gentlemen, it is a fact that he said that; I heard it myself. How did he reach these figures? He assumed that each farmer would crop 320 acres of land, his whole homestead and pre-emption. (Laughter.) He was to live in a balloon, for Sir Charles didn't leave him any room to build a house; he was to have his barns and stables in the air, his cattle were to pasture in the clouds, he was to have no grass, he was to have no garden, he was to have no roots, he was to have no crop of any kind but wheat; there was to be no room for fences, no room for roads through his farm, no anything, but every inch of 320 acres was to be sowed to wheat; and then he estimated that every acre would produce twenty bushels, and so he made out that each farmer would produce 6,400 bushels, and a hundred thousand farmers would, of course, produce 640,000,000 bushels. (Loud and prolonged laughter.) *These are the stories with which these men tried to gull, not the farmers, because there is no rural audience that could be collected that would not laugh such absurdities to scorn, but the Parliament and the people at large.* They went to work to survey the country.

#### IMMENSE PREMATURE SURVEYS.

They said such an immigration as never was heard of before will go into the North-West; we must prepare at once for the millions about to cross the ocean and fill up that territory; we must survey acres by the tens of millions—and they did. They surveyed so far and so fast that there are hundreds of thousands of farms surveyed which will not be settled in your lifetime or mine. There

is one block along the Canadian Pacific Railway itself 400 miles long. Take the distance from Hamilton to Montreal—it is less than 400. *Think of a strip that long and forty-eight miles wide, all surveyed and ready to be occupied as farms.* And how many homesteads were there on that strip on 31st December last? *There were 138.* (Cheers and laughter.) And this was on the line itself—but THEIR SURVEYS WERE NOT CONFINED TO THOSE PARTS OF THE LINE FOR WHICH THEY WOULD HAVE HAD SOME SORT OF EXCUSE. I was telling my friends at Chesley yesterday of a gentleman who was travelling across the plains, and he caught up to an Indian or Half-breed driving along in a Red River cart. He noticed there was something out of the common in the cart. And what do you suppose? The cart had in it a lot of surveyor's flags. (Loud laughter.) The fellow had picked them up as he went along to make his camp fire. (Cheers and renewed laughter.) We have been engaged in these surveys of all these tens of millions of acres, and meanwhile what has happened? This happened:—THE GOVERNMENT WAS TOO BUSY WITH THESE GREAT SCHEMES OF BRINGING IN MILLIONS OF PEOPLE FROM THE OUTSIDE, AND THEIR SCHEMES TO MAKE FRIENDS RICH OUT OF THE NORTH-WESTERN LANDS, TO ATTEND TO THE FEW WHO WERE ALREADY THERE. They had no surveyors to send out, and no money to spend in surveying the lands of the people already long settled in the country, and who are calling for surveys in the remote parts where they were settled, so that they might patent, sell, divide, devise, mortgage, or otherwise deal with their properties as you and I want to do. *For years they called, for years they cried, for years they asked and begged for surveys,* and I could read from the blue-books the reports of the Government's own officers that there was dissatisfaction and uneasiness, but that those who were dissatisfied must wait, because *the grand projects of the Government left them no time to attend to the wants and demands of the people already in the country.* I said to them once and again, "The best advertisement you can have to induce people to come from abroad is a happy, prosperous, and contented population already there. (Loud and prolonged applause.) Get letters and statements from the settlers showing that they are satisfied and cheerful, that they have not grievances, that they advise the millions of landless folk abroad to come and join them, and these statements, giving in their own simple language the story of their trials and of their success, will do you more good than hundreds of statements by Sir Charles Tupper showing that 100,000 farmers will produce 640 million bushels of wheat in a year. (Loud and prolonged applause.) They will do more for you, because no sensible man will believe these marvellous stories you tell, while all sensible men will be inclined to believe the statements made by the actual settlers themselves" (Cheers.) But no, gentlemen,



## THEY WERE BLIND AND DEAF

to these considerations. A few years ago we pointed out that some complaints had, as we had learned, come to Ottawa, and the cry of the settlers had reached further than the departmental pigeon-holes. Some had reached members of Parliament, myself among others. I moved for papers showing what the grievances of the settlers of Prince Albert were. I moved that in March, 1883. The House ordered that the papers should be brought down. But the papers were not brought down until after the rebellion broke out, until we were dealing with that question in 1885. Mr. Cameron, of Huron, moved that there should be a committee of the House to consider the

## GRIEVANCES OF THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH-WEST.

—grievances alleged to exist by the people of Manitoba, by the people of the North-West Territories, by the North-West Council, by settlers, and by missionaries. But the Government negatived the motion for a committee. Then we said:—*The true safety-valve, the best thing that can be done is to apply the constitutional remedy—give these people representation in the councils of the nation; they live far off, they cannot see us, and we cannot speak to them; we have not the same means of learning their wants and grievances as in other parts of the Dominion. Give them members, men chosen by themselves, men who know the wants of the country, men to come at the bidding of these people, to be responsible to them and to Parliament, to state the condition of the country and call for redress of grievances. We brought in measures for this purpose.* The Government rejected them, and declared that they would not even give these people representation. There was no hurry; the time would come! But the rebellion broke out, and AFTER THE REBELLION WAS OVER, and in the last session of Parliament, AFTER FIVE MILLIONS, to be paid out of your taxes, HAD BEEN WASTED in war, AFTER BLOOD HAD BEEN SPILT, AFTER UNTOLD PANGS HAD BEEN INFLICTED upon the people, AFTER THE REPUTATION OF OUR COUNTRY HAD BEEN TARNISHED, AFTER A SET-BACK HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE PROSPERITY OF THE NORTH-WEST from which it will not recover for years, then—THEN AT LAST, and not till then—they brought down and passed a measure granting representation to the North-West. (Loud applause.)

I am absolutely convinced that *had our advice been taken and representation accorded in time, there would have been no rebellion.* It should not be lost sight of that it was of the utmost importance, for high political reasons, that the Half-breeds should be kept peaceful and loyal.

## IMMENSE VALUE OF HALF-BREED SYMPATHY.

The great danger in that country was from the Indians, and the Half-breeds formed a link between us and them which should have brought us more into sympathy with them and afforded us means of controlling them, of learning their character and their wants, and how best to deal with them. Now, in 1869, when Canada assumed the Government of the new territory, the Half-breeds of the eastern part came forward with a proposition. They said :—*It has ever been recognized by Britain that the Indians living in a country over which she assumes sovereignty, have certain moral rights, indefinite they may be, but not the less to be regarded, in the soil, not merely that part of the soil they happen each of them to occupy, but the soil of the region. We are partly of Indian blood, and as such, being residents of this region, we claim compensation for that right which you are now about to take away from us.* On the settlement THAT RIGHT WAS ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE GOVERNMENT, SIR JOHN MACDONALD BEING THEN IN POWER, and besides the title to the land they happened to occupy, certain lands or scrip for lands were given to each Half-breed, 160 acres for each person of full age, and 240 acres for each child, expressly in extinguishment of what was called their Indian title, and THUS IT WAS SOLEMNLY RECOGNIZED THAT THE HALF-BREEDS HAD SUCH A TITLE. As settlement began to extend in the outlying North-West Territories, and the buffalo disappeared, and the Half-breeds of these parts were obliged to change their mode of life and settle down on farms, the demand for a recognition of their rights of precisely the same character arose. It could not be denied. They were in just the same position as those of the East, and the rights of their relatives had been accorded. It was in 1878 that this demand was pressed, and in the winter of that year Sir John Macdonald's officers caused inquiries to be made and reports to be obtained which showed that, in the opinion of those whom they consulted, it was not merely important that the question should be settled, but important that it should be settled without delay, because

## DELAYS WERE DANGEROUS

and would produce sores and irritations, and render a settlement at a later date more difficult. Upon that the Government decided to ask Parliament to give them the power necessary to effect a settlement; and IN MAY, 1879, PARLIAMENT PASSED AN ACT AT THEIR REQUEST, AND, IN THEIR WORDS, GIVING THEM AUTHORITY TO GRANT SUCH LANDS OR SUCH SCRIP, and on such conditions as they thought right in the settlement of these claims. So that at

that time, and by their own request, THEY WERE CLOTHED WITH THE FULLEST AUTHORITY TO SETTLE THIS CLAIM.

### CRUEL AND CALLOUS NEGLECT:

From that time till 1885 they did towards a settlement absolutely nothing—absolutely nothing. Nor was their utter neglect palliated by the absence of remonstrances, for from year to year poured in petitions, representations, resolutions of meetings, letters, resolves of the North-West Council, all pointing to the importance of at once settling this question. But, until January, 1885, they did nothing—absolutely nothing. In that month they did something which was a half-way measure, utterly inadequate, and having taken that half-measure they stopped, and *until March or April, 1885, after the rebellion had actually broken out, they did nothing more.* But in March, 1885, they took the first somewhat effectual step towards recognizing the right of the Half-breeds of the North-West in respect of the Indian title; but even then the recognition was inadequate, and it was not till April that *they were forced by fear to do justice.* This delay took place notwithstanding that in June, 1884, the Half-breeds had called into the country as their chief and leader Riel, who had great influence over them, and in whom they had the greatest confidence, to advise and counsel them, and to direct the agitation for what they called their rights. One would have thought that even though the Government had been blind and deaf to all hints and warnings before, this, at any rate, would have awaked them. One would have thought that when the author of the old trouble had been called in again, and when he was holding public meetings, exciting the people, and calling for redress, this would have aroused them. More than this, there were remonstrances sent down from high dignitaries, bishops, missionaries, public officers, ~~persons~~ in authority, all through the Territories, calling upon the Government to act, and to act at once. They had, even then, plenty of time and room to act, and plenty of reasons for acting early. (Applause.) I do not know what possessed them; I have been *utterly unable to conjecture what it was that possessed these people with a spirit of obstinacy and apathy so great as to prevent them from taking even the first step towards the redress of these grievances until it was too late.* It could not be that they were not alive to the state of affairs, for the papers show that though they took no measures for redress, they did take measures of repression. In July, 1884, they sent Col. Houghton to the district, to take away the arms of the militia, for fear they might be improperly used. They applied to the Hudson's Bay Company for and got possession of the old post at Carleton, to be used as a

special station for the Mounted Police, and they put a number of men there in case of trouble.

#### THEY COULD INVENT MEASURES OF REPRESSION,

but toward the good old constitutional measure of remedying the grievances, of taking away the causes of offence, of removing the origin of the discontent and trouble, *not the first step was taken until it was too late.* (Cheers.) They say now that the rebellion was precipitated, because in January they took the first step toward settling the difficulty; that Riel rose earlier than he intended, because he found the Government was moving at last, and he felt that if he waited a few days more the causes of dissatisfaction among the people would be removed, and he would be without a cry for rebellion; and the people would not rise in his support. *Does not that statement, in itself, prove that there would have been no rebellion at all had the Government acted earlier?* (Loud cheers.) Could I give you plainer proof of their guilt than this—their own statement? *If they had acted in 1882, in 1883, in the summer of 1884, in the fall of 1884, even if they had acted effectually in December of 1884, January, 1885; they would have acted late indeed, but yet in time enough to remove what they admit to be a main lever and help for Riel in the rising, the grievance which was left untouched in spite of petitions, but which was soon adjusted when the rebellion broke out.* (Cheers.) What was the extent of this particular grievance? They say it was not very great in the district which was particularly disturbed, in which the rising took place. That has very little to do with the question. The danger never was confined to the case of the few men who rose. From them there could be no danger. **THE DANGER WAS GREAT LEST THE HALF-BREEDS GENERALLY SHOULD RISE AND JOIN THE CAUSE LED BY RIEL, AND THE DANGER WAS STILL GREATER LEST THE INDIANS ALSO SHOULD RISE.** Now, the danger with reference to the Half-breeds generally was very great. How do I prove it? I prove it by the fact that this grievance to which I have referred was submitted to a Commission, and that Commission has since reported the cases of about

**1,700 INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE ENTITLED TO SHARE IN THIS CLAIM,**

or allowance for the extinguishment of the Indian title, and who had not received justice for all these years. I prove it by the further fact that there was an analogous and long-standing grievance in respect of those who were entitled to share in the grant made to the Half-breeds of Manitoba, but who were absent at the time, and were not enumerated, and of these nearly four hundred cases have been found. These two together make about two thou-

*sand cases of this class of grievance. That is a good many in itself, but when you reflect that the whole Half-breed population in the North-West, men, women, and children, was, about 4,800, and of these about two thousand had long-standing and unredressed grievances of this class, the case becomes startling indeed. Take the population of Ontario, about two millions of people, and suppose that over 800,000 souls amongst our population had each one an individual grievance against the Government of a great many years' standing, and I want to know how peaceful and quiet, and contented and happy we would be. (Loud applause.) We would agitate, we would protest, we would be disturbed and discontented, and we should be unworthy of our name and of the position and liberties our forefathers won for us if we should sit perfectly quiet for years under absolute neglect without finding the first attempt made to remove the grievances of so large a portion of the population!*

#### GOVERNMENT'S GUILT PROVED FROM OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.

I can show to you from the papers and statements of these men themselves that there were grievances affecting a large portion of the Half-breed population; that the fact was known to them, and the importance of an early remedy was also known; that they asked for and received in 1879 full power to settle the difficulty; that they did not move at all until 1885; that they were asked again and again in the meantime to act; that they were warned again and again in the meantime of the danger of delay; that in June, 1884, Riel came in, and they were thus especially warned in time to have averted the danger; that they in some sort knew the danger of the situation, and thought it serious enough to justify them in taking away the militia service and establishing a special post of the Mounted Police; that notwithstanding all this, they did nothing to redress till 1885. In the Commons House of Parliament I HAVE TOLD THESE MEN FACE TO FACE, THAT BEFORE GOD AND MAN I HOLD THEM RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERY DROP OF BLOOD SPILLED, EVERY PANG SUFFERED, EVERY DOLLAR OF TREASURE SPENT, ALL OUR LOSS OF REPUTATION, ALL OUR BLASTED HOPES, BECAUSE OF THIS REBELLION; AND WHAT I SAID TO THEM FACE TO FACE I SAY TO YOU TO-DAY. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

Well, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, these are the men who come before you towards the close of their Parliamentary term and claim a renewal of your confidence. Will they ask it on the score that after you first gave them your confidence, and when they became connected with the North-West, they marked Canada's acquisition of that territory by a rebellion due to their mismanagement, and on the further score that towards the close of their second term they have by their accumulated

misdeeds and neglect produced a second rebellion in that country? (Cheers.) I say no more damning record of utter incapacity, absolute neglect, and complete forgetfulness of the duties and responsibilities of office can be disclosed than that which even the imperfect records we have relating to this unhappy affair sufficiently evidence. But we have not got it all! They are too wise to let us have it all. (Applause.)

#### GOVERNMENT DARE NOT BRING DOWN THE WHOLE RECORD.

The day that news came that war had broken out in Canada, I called for papers on the subject. That call I have again and again renewed since then. From various sources I learned, on various grounds I conjectured, judging from the probable results of motives of duty and policy, I was sure there were communications from various persons pointing out the situation of affairs, particularly during the summer of 1884, and the fall of the same year. I called for these communications, but was told that at that time nothing could be given. I called again and again. At one time I was told there were not clerks enough to copy them, that it would take too much time, that I was too inquisitive, but that I would get them some later day. At another time I was told it was a monstrous request, for the rebellion would be aggravated by bringing them down. (Laughter.) Again I was told that I was a heartless, cruel man, asking that papers should be brought down when the bringing of them down would put the lives of missionaries and officials in peril. *These papers, I charge, showed that the missionaries and officials had done their duty in warning the Government of the true state of affairs, and that the Government had neglected its duty in paying no heed to these warnings.* I ask you, as sensible men, do you suppose that the lives of missionaries and officials would be put in peril by papers being brought down such as these? (Applause) They wrote to the Government saying:—Here is a grievance; the people feel it and are discontented; redress the grievance, and redress it quickly, or difficulty will arise. Of course, such a letter as that would strengthen, not weaken, the missionary or official who wrote it with the people, for they would say:—“Here is a man who is alive to our situation, who admits that we have grievances, who calls for their settlement.” Such a letter would not endanger its writer's life. I admit, however, that there would be danger in bringing down these papers, and that life would be imperilled. But

#### THE DANGER WOULD BE TO THE GOVERNMENT,

and the life imperilled would be the political life of those untrustworthy stewards of your affairs. (Loud laughter and applause.)

And so I went on asking until I was nearly as weary as they were. Towards the close of the session before last, after having made statements of many of the missing papers, I put a series of questions on the paper in which I inquired whether there were letters from this, that, and the other person. In some cases I was told there were, and in some cases that it was believed there were such letters, but the papers would be collected and laid upon the table at the beginning of the following session. When the session—that is last session—opened, I asked where the papers were. Sir John Macdonald said:—"If you will renew the question in a day or two I will in the meantime look up the report of the debates and let you know." (Laughter.) I asked again, but he told me that he had not yet had time to look the matter up. You see this matter was of no interest to him, and he had no doubt forgotten it. (Laughter.) I asked again, and he replied that really my demands of the previous session had been so numerous that he must ask me to go them all over again, and tell him what I wanted. I said in substance:

The record is there. Now I will tell you what I want. I want to know whether you acknowledge it to be your duty, and whether you intend to bring down any of the papers this session, having regard to the responsibility of the Government and the pledges they have made?

He replied:—"We do."

I asked "When?"

He said:—"They are now in course of preparation."

I waited for weeks and still could not get them. I then moved a resolution declaring that it was the duty of the Government to bring down all the papers relating to this matter without delay. They met that motion with a speech in which they pointed out all the papers that had been brought down, and suggested that no more could be expected or desired. I spoke again. I went over a large part of my own budget of the previous session, reading from the reports of the debates. Then one of them rose and said:—"Now that the honourable gentleman has stated what he wants (all of which and more had been stated in the previous session) we will treat his speech as if it had been an order of the House, the papers will be prepared and brought down at the earliest possible moment."

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AND THEY'RE NOT DOWN YET.

(Loud applause and laughter.) But they defeated my motion because a confiding member on their own side of the House proposed as an amendment that, having regard to the declarations of the Government and their willingness to bring down all the papers, the House was satisfied, and the majority, composed largely of

such men as the member for Gloucester (Mr. Burns), of whom I told you, carried that amendment. We moved for a committee of inquiry, I declaring in my place that I believed I could prove that there were important papers affecting the delay, neglect, and mismanagement of the Government in the North-West, and which were, or had been, in the archives, if I could get a committee to take evidence. But they voted that down, and would not give me the means of proving my words, nor would they bring down the papers.

#### WHAT DOES ALL THIS SHOW?

*If there was a dispute between two of your neighbours in which the proof afforded by certain papers in the possession of one was said to be important to make good the case of the other, and if he refused to produce those papers, would you say that that proved his innocence?* (Laughter.) Not at all; you would say that was of itself strong evidence on the other side. The holder would be very glad to bring them forward if they helped his case and disproved his opponent's. (Applause.) "Everything is presumed against him who conceals or destroys the papers." That is what the law says, and the principles of the law are, after all, founded on common sense. You presume the worst against the man who destroys the documents, because if they would not prove the worse he would rather have produced than destroyed them. I hope these documents, or the evidence of them, will yet see the light. I am afraid it will require great pressure, and that pressure will have to be applied by the electorate before we shall see the true inwardness of this whole matter. Partly from such reports as the Government were forced to bring down, partly from newspapers and other sources, I have gathered certain facts, and have laid them before Parliament and the people. These facts, some of which I have stated, are even now fully proven, and you can depend upon them. How much more there is to be learned, what greater mystery of iniquity is hid yet within those pigeon-holes you can only conjecture who see that in the face of all remonstrances, in the face of all their own promises, in breach of their public duty, the Government refuses to let them see the light of day.

Now do not for a moment suppose that I have stated all the grievances and neglects, or even the chief grievances and neglects, affecting those who actually rose. I have not done so, nor does time allow. But grave grounds of complaint there were with reference to their surveys, their river fronts, the arrangements for their holdings, the reserves for colonization companies, and other matters; and gross neglect—the grossest neglect—there was no reference to the letters, petitions, and remonstrances sent down by these poor people and their missionaries—some being never even answered,



and the bulk shamefully delayed and ignored. The discussion of these grievances would require a speech. I pass them by for the present.

#### NORTH-WEST INDIANS.

Another great source of danger to the North-West was the unfortunate condition of the Indian population. That population was numerous, it was warlike and trained to battle and combat of a certain kind—the Indian warfare. It was dissatisfied, irritated, discontented, because it also had been miserably misgoverned, because the liberal appropriations which Parliament had made (adequate, so far as I can judge, with the most moderate exertions on the part of the Indians themselves, to sustain them with reasonable comfort) had been so applied, or rather, so misapplied, or were so left unused, that THE INDIANS WERE IN LARGE NUMBERS STARVED, and in greater numbers half-starved. For the official reports show you the cases of numbers of those people, some mere children, people of tender years, actually dying of starvation; and others of disease engendered or accelerated by famine. Kashell showed that it was the policy of the Government to coerce the Indians into such action as it thought right by reducing them from rations to half-rations, and from that to quarter-rations, and I don't know how much lower, in order to starve them into removal. The Indian is very different from the white man in many respects. The habits of his life have led him to be improvident, and he gorges himself when he has a supply of food, and abstains very patiently when he can't get it. When you reflect that these half or quarter-rations are distributed weekly, or two or three times a week, to the head of the family, you can easily see, judging from the character of the Indian, what the result was likely to be. The starvation rations given out were eaten at once, and perhaps they were eaten by the buck, and the squaw and papooses were left absolutely to starve. This was done in some cases without any cause whatever. The food supplied was also unsuitable, and produced disease and death. There were other courses pursued of immorality and wickedness, to which, before a mixed audience, I dislike to allude, but which were certain to produce the worst results. The

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#### WHOLE STORY IS HUMILIATING.

A national sin has received a retribution. The Indians were so misgoverned and mismanaged that they were ripe for revolt. And the Half-breeds, who should have been our influence for good, had also, as I have shown you, been alienated by neglect, delay, and mismanagement. It was under such circumstances that Riel came

in, and under such circumstances that the Government remained inactive during 1884.

"WHAT ABOUT RIEL?"

I shall now, with your permission, answer the question put me by a gentleman in the audience, "What about Riel?" I did not answer that question then, desiring to finish what I had to say upon the subject I was treating; but I am ready to reply. THE REFORM PARTY, ALTHOUGH THEY BELIEVED THAT THERE HAD BEEN ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT GREAT NEGLECT, MISGOVERNMENT, AND DELAY, FELT IT TO BE THEIR DUTY, WHILE THE REBELLION WAS AFOOT, TO ASSIST THE AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNTRY in the suppression of the revolt against law and in the restoration of peace and order. They felt it their duty emphatically to do so, having regard to the critical condition of the country, due to the Indian population. It was that fear of the Indians, the knowledge of the danger to those in isolated settlements, that induced us finally to say to the Government: "Go on; you know the danger, you keep information on this question to yourselves, you say you can't tell us; all right, don't tell us, but take all the men you say you want. Take all the arms and supplies necessary. We vote them freely; we will help you as far as we can so that order may be restored and the settlers saved."

ORDER WAS RESTORED

and then came the process of the law against the rebels. You remember how, during the outbreak, the Government charged the white settlers of Prince Albert with being the most criminal persons in connection with this rebellion. And when the trials came on they sent instructions to their counsel that amongst the most important things they had to do was to ferret out this matter; find those wicked whites, and bring them to trial and punishment, for they it was who incited the Half-breeds to revolt, and they deserved a severer sentence than the others. No doubt the Government employed able and trustworthy counsel. No doubt those counsel did their duty. But they were enabled to find only two or three whites who were men worthy of being brought to trial. One of them was concerned, but, being insane at the time, he was acquitted; and one was found not guilty, nothing whatever having been proven against him. There were none others fit to be even brought to trial. They put thirty or forty Indians and about as many Half-breeds on their trial, and they put Riel upon his trial also. The question whether Riel was properly submitted to the extreme penalty of the law created great excitement. I was, at that time, not in the country. When I returned I found

## THE COUNTRY IN A GREAT FERMENT.

I found an effort being made to create national, race, religious, and party issues upon this question. I found the *Toronto Mail*, for instance, declaring that the whole French and Catholic population were going one way on grounds of nationality and creed, and were to attack the Government because a Frenchman and a Catholic had been executed, and calling upon all other races and creeds to support the Government, and so, forsooth, to put down this national and religious cry. I SAID THAT A QUESTION WHICH INVOLVED THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, A QUESTION WHICH INVOLVED NATIONALITY AND RELIGION, SHOULD NEVER BY MY CONSENT OR BY MY INFLUENCE, OR IF I COULD PREVENT IT, BE MADE A PARTY QUESTION AT ALL. I want the administration of justice to be discussed, as I want all questions which may touch religious or national feelings or prejudices to be discussed apart from party bias, so that no consideration of party zeal may influence us to do things that would tend to impair the administration of justice, or to inflame religious or national passions or prejudices. (Cheers.) For myself, and for my party as its leader, I gave my pledge that when that question came up it should be considered and voted on by us as each man, after patient attention to the attacks upon the Government on the one hand, and the defence of the Government on the other, should deem in his heart and conscience it was right and proper to vote, and that we would not attempt to form any party connection. I declared that upon it we would be, as I believed, divided in opinion, and would vote according to our individual opinions. On the other hand I declared that

THE WICKED ATTEMPT OF "THE MAIL" AND THE OTHER TORY  
ORGANS TO RAISE A NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS ANTI-FRENCH  
AND ANTI-CATHOLIC CRY,

on the representation that all the French and Catholic members would vote against the Government, was based on a mis-statement. I stated my conviction that with them, as with the Reform party, opinion was divided; and I assured the people that the cry of the Government in danger was only a device to entrap and excite portions of the people into a disastrous war of race and creed. As I said, so it was. The Liberal members made no party connection, gave no party vote; each man voted perfectly freely and as, in his conscience, he thought right, and we were about equally divided. It was

## A DIFFICULT AND COMPLICATED QUESTION.

I would like to discuss it before you at length, but, for want of time, I am compelled to deal with only some of its phases, and in a few words. The main point in my mind was this: Was the man intellectually in such a condition that the extreme penalty of the law should be inflicted? Our law for all crimes recognizes a great distinction between the moral guilt of men, even though they commit what is known to the law as the same crime. The degrees of provocation, of premeditation, of imbecility, or insanity, are among the elements taken into consideration as affecting the moral guilt and the consequent punishment. In all crimes known to the law, except one, the weight to be given to these considerations is decided by the judge. If you have attended the assizes as jurymen or witnesses, you have probably seen two men convicted on different days of the same legal crime. At the close of the assizes the judge sentences both, and in one case he may send a man to the penitentiary for fifteen years or for life, and another guilty of the same legal crime he may send for three days to gaol. IF THEY WERE CONVICTED OF THE SAME CRIME, WHY NOT GIVE THEM THE SAME SENTENCE? Because, though the crime was the same, the moral guilt was different, and what would be only adequate punishment in one case would be far too severe in another. Out of 279 sentences which do not affect the life of the prisoner, and in which the judge apportions the punishment to the crime, only one is in practice altered by the action of the Executive. This is because the judge has apportioned the penalty; but in the capital sentence the judge, under the law, is bound to pronounce not the appropriate sentence but the extreme sentence of the law, and the duty he discharges in other cases is handed over in this case to the Executive. It cannot be contended for a moment that there may not be as many shades of guilt in murder as in assault or robbery. The consequence of this distinction is that one out of every two capital sentences instead of one out of 279, is commuted in Ontario and Quebec. In England less than half the men sentenced to death are really executed. Why? Because the Government is bound to consider each case and to decide, as the judge does on other cases, on the extent of responsibility and of moral guilt. NOW THIS MAN HAD BEEN CERTAINLY MAD. That is disputed by no candid man. HE HAD BEEN IN THREE LUNATIC ASYLUMS. HIS DELUSIONS WERE PROVED AND KNOWN. If I had time to tell you of those delusions, you would see that they were such as no sane man could hold. He recovered and was discharged from the asylum. The rule is, as established by experience, that three persons out of four who have once

become insane either continue insane or become insane again. The probabilities were therefore that, though he had recovered, insanity would at some time manifest itself in him again. He was proved to have suffered under the same delusions, the same aberrations of intellect, in the North-West, as he had suffered under when in the asylum, and under others also. I came to the conclusion, and I believed as clearly as I believe I am standing here to-day, that

#### HIS INTELLECT WAS SERIOUSLY DISTURBED

and unbalanced, that he was insane. Having been myself a Minister of Justice, having years before been called upon to discharge perhaps the most solemn and painful duty that can be laid upon a man—practically upon my own responsibility to determine whether a fellow-creature's life should end on the gallows, or whether it was compatible with or due to the interests of justice and the good of society that he should suffer the secondary punishment of imprisonment for life—it became my duty then to consider these questions in relation to the principles which underlie them years before this case occurred. I came to the conclusion then that where a man's intellect was seriously unsettled, though he might have some responsibility, and though the interests of society might require his punishment, I ought not, as Minister of Justice, to advise that such a one should be consigned to the scaffold, that I might send him to the penitentiary, and then, according to circumstances as they developed, let him remain there or remove him to a criminal lunatic asylum for his life. I applied the conclusions thus reached years before, after careful thought and study, to the facts before me, and saw that I could not honestly vote in favour of any decision but that the SENTENCE OF EXECUTION OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN COMMUTED—not that the man should be pardoned as so many have wrongly declared I said. I said that the man was guilty. He had, as the jury found, sufficient intellect to be properly declared guilty, but a secondary punishment ought to have been substituted for the extreme one of death. (Applause.)

#### THE VERDICT DID NOT SETTLE THE QUESTION.

The Government seem to have concluded that the verdict settled the question. It did not. Our law requires, in order to an acquittal on the ground of insanity, that the jury should be satisfied that the prisoner is so insane that he does not know right from wrong. I will not give you the other technical distinctions. This is enough for the occasion. This, then, is all the verdict proved. But the great bulk of the lunatics in the asylums do, as any doctor will tell you, have a knowledge of right and wrong, and therefore

there remained matter for enquiry by the Executive. Though not so insane as to be entitled to a verdict of not guilty, was he of such disordered intellect as not to be a fit subject for the gallows? To put it as a great English judge described the case of a commuted murderer,

“THOUGH NOT MAD ENOUGH TO BE ACQUITTED, HE WAS OBVIOUSLY TOO MAD TO BE HANGED.”

That is my firm belief. But the Government deliberately decided not to enter on that question, and they claim that the verdict settled it. They are wrong in law, they are wrong in justice, they are wrong in humanity, and the principle they applied cannot, as I believe, be supported. The execution, then, was on this ground, as I thought, a blow at the administration of criminal justice. Other important points there were—points of the greatest gravity, but for their discussion there is no time, and I must pass them by. I voted then to regret the execution. I never gave a vote with so much pain in my life. The vote could do us no good, so far as the man was concerned. It was not a question of saving his life, for the man was dead. I knew, also, that a large number of my own friends were inclined to a conclusion, on information, as I believed, one-sided and inadequate, different from my own. I knew that many, whose judgment I value highly, thought differently from me. I knew too, that there was a cloud of passion,

#### A MIST OF PREJUDICE ABOUT THIS CASE,

which was likely to prevent the formation of a sound and unbiased judgment among the masses of the population. I felt, however, that there was a principle at stake. I decided to give such a vote as would, in my belief, commend itself to the calm consideration of future years, perhaps of future generations, when that cloud of passion and prejudice should have rolled away. (Hear, hear.) I knew my conclusion would be unpopular. I was aware that it would lose me strength. I should have been glad to have done nothing which would shock the prejudices or affections, still less anything which would oppose itself to the judgment of honest, honourable, high-minded men with whom I had worked so long, and with whom it may after all be my fortune to co-operate in the future. But, as I said the other day to my own constituents, highly as I valued their mandate to represent them in Parliament, they would demand of me too high a price even for that great honour if, as a condition of continuing it, they should call upon me to sacrifice my convictions in order to satisfy their opinions. I understand that what they sent me there for was this—to act in general accordance with the great Liberal princi-

ples which they and I hold in common, and in all particular instances to endeavour to apply these principles; on every question to ascertain the facts of the case, to discover the law applicable to those facts; to strive to reach a sound conclusion as to what justice and the public interest required, and to vote accordingly, no matter whether I voted with or against their ruling; to take the consequences, whatever these might be, but in no case to violate my convictions. That was my duty; not from fear of incurring their displeasure, to give a vote which did not commend itself to the heart and head with which I was called upon to serve them to the best of my poor ability. (Cheers.) Knowing, then, that it would be distasteful to valued friends who were allied with me, while I would have been very glad to have given a different vote, could I have done so honestly, I GAVE, WITHOUT HESITATION, THE VOTE WHICH CONSCIENCE CALLED UPON ME TO GIVE, AND I ASK YOU NOW WHETHER IT WAS BETTER SO TO VOTE, OR TO VOTE AS SOME OF YOU MIGHT HAVE WISHED, AND AGAINST THE MONITOR WITHIN. (Loud and prolonged cheering, and voices, "You did right.")

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